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## From the Editor

### Your Values – and Ours

In the days immediately following November's Presidential election, I heard a lot of talk in the media about the importance of values in the final vote tally. Americans, according to the exit pollsters and the pundits, had swarmed the ballot boxes across the continent to voice their support of values related to family, patriotism, religion, and a host of moral issues. In my role with this magazine, I began to wonder a little about the values that architects hold dear. For that matter, I spent some time examining the values that govern my own decision-making as an editor – as a journalist whose job is to cover the world of architecture and design.

Professionals such as architects often formalize their shared values in a document called a code of ethics. The American Institute of Architects, for example, publishes just such a code. It states quite clearly that its members "are dedicated to the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and competence." That's a broad generalization, of course, but the code goes on to iterate five canons, or principles of conduct, that create boundaries of general ethical conduct and address a set of obligations to the public, clients, the profession, and colleagues. The code lists a set of ethical standards under each of the canons and, beneath those, specific rules. The rules deal with issues such as nondiscrimination, obeying the law, public safety, truthfulness, and avoiding conflicts of interest. There's nothing radical here, just a good, common-sense list of ground rules for professional conduct.

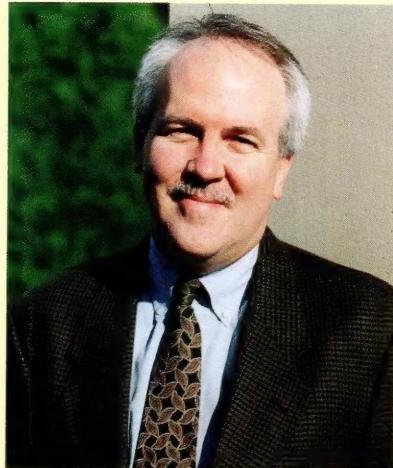
The context for working journalists is quite different from the daily routine of an architect's office, but journalists (at least, most of the ones I know) also strive to govern their work habits by a set of specified values. No less than the venerable *New York Times* publishes a 54-page handbook titled "Ethical Journalism" that sets down rules for its teams of reporters, editors, photographers, and the like. Most daily newspapers and other journalism organizations – such as the Society of Professional Journalists and the American Society of Newspaper Editors – also produce codes of ethics. They address matters such as avoiding perceptions of impropriety, accepting free travel and gifts, and treating sources with respect and honesty. In each case, the emphasis of the codes is to guide professional behavior in a manner that accomplishes two things for publishers: first, to promote the integrity of its employees and, second, to protect the credibility of the publications that they produce.

Credibility is the cornerstone on which much of good journalism is based, and for the fifteen years that we have published *Inform* it is one of the values we have guarded dearly. If readers cannot believe the words that are put in front of them on the printed page, then what is the point? If readers doubt the motivations of the messenger, how long will they continue to devote time to the message?

We are not, of course, heavy on investigative journalism here. But we want to be trusted; we want to earn your respect. So, like other magazines, we take several steps to safeguard our integrity and credibility. At a minimum, we try to be fair in our judgments. While covering an industry dominated by white men, we strive to pay attention to the contributions of women and minorities. We do not condone plagiarism. When we make a mistake, we own up to it right away and try to correct the error. And we work to maintain a healthy separation between the editorial interests of the magazine and the need to sell advertising. We never, for example, publish an article about an advertiser in exchange for that company's purchase of an ad. Likewise, we select the buildings we publish based on the merits of the design or its importance to some larger issue we might be writing about.

Guidelines such as these provide a means to test our decisions, helping us to earn credibility among readers and keep it. In that sense, architects and journalists, by adopting codes of ethics, share at least one important realization: It takes a long time to build trust, but only a brief moment to destroy it.

– Vernon Mays



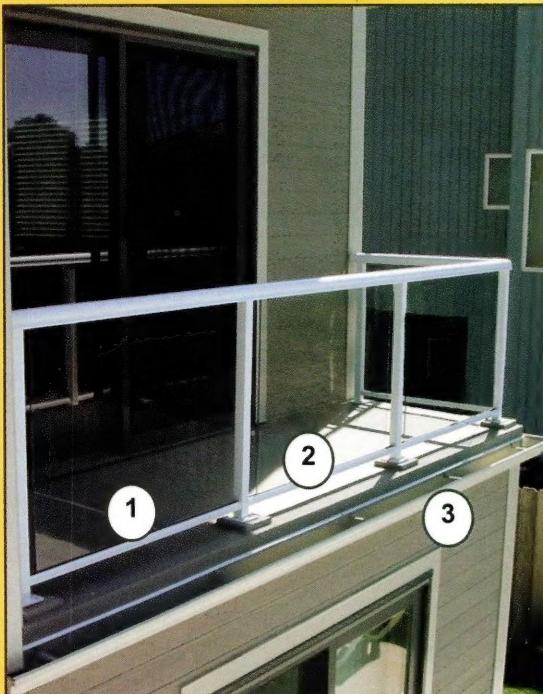
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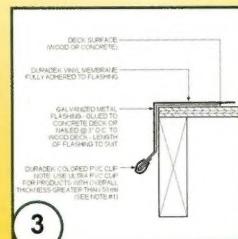
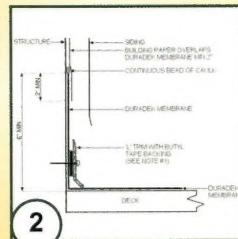
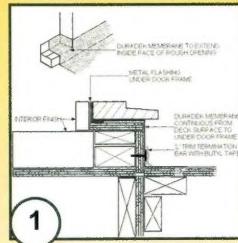
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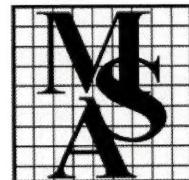
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## Site Specific

In a new house along the banks of the Occoquan River, architect Robert M. Gurney capitalizes on open vistas of the water, while also fostering a sense of solitude in the woods. *By Vernon Mays*

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## A Measure of Time

Architects Carrie Meinberg Burke and Kevin Burke design their residence in Charlottesville to harness the sun's universal power and celebrate the summer and winter solstices. *By Cheryl Weber*

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doing the small thing well



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On the cover:

Occoquan River Residence.

Photo by Hoachlander/Davis Photography

In our next issue:  
Health Care Design

**A**t the seventh annual Visions for Architecture gala, a crowd of more than 400 descended upon Richmond's Landmark Theater on November 12 for an evening of dining, dancing, and celebration. Throughout the night, guests honored the Virginia Foundation for Architecture in its golden anniversary year. Fifty years prior, a group of Virginia architects founded the Virginia Foundation for Architectural Education in order to promote architectural development, education, and research in Virginia, with an emphasis on the state's architecture schools.

The Foundation's growth from scholarship provider to community organization and architectural steward culminated late last year with the acquisition of the landmark Branch House, designed by John Russell Pope. The VFA plans to revive and reopen the house as an architecture museum with a regional focus on contemporary design. "We will be ready to welcome you during April's Virginia Architecture Week for our grand opening," said foundation President John W. Braymer, Hon. AIA. Braymer announced that the Center's inaugural exhibition will focus on Frank Gehry's new Disney Concert Hall. The VFA has planned the exhibition – organized by the Center's curator Vernon Mays – to coincide with Gehry's appearance in April at The Richmond Forum, a popular lecture series that draws a large public audience. In addition to sharing news on the Center's plans, Braymer acknowledged the many supporters of the Foundation's mission, including Capital One and Mary Clark Roane Downing, whose generous gifts have enabled the restoration of the Branch House that is currently underway.

Virginia Society AIA President William E. Evans then took the stage to present the Society's annual design and honor awards, which included sixteen projects, selected from a field of 148, honored for excellence in design. Notable in this year's selection was an increasingly global reach – the winning architects and firms submitted projects in such far-flung locales as Spain, India, Great Britain, and Kenya. Others set a new bar for innovative and sus-

## Architecture Foundation Reflects on Fifty Years of Achievement



Guests enjoy dinner in the ballroom of Richmond's Landmark Theater, built in 1926.

tainable design in Virginia. Twelve individuals and two architecture firms were honored for their exceptional contributions to their profession and communities. Mary Harding Sadler and Carlton Abbott & Partners both received recognition for their important contributions to preservation of sites throughout the state. Honorary memberships went to two individuals: Susan R. Stein, curator of Monticello, and Murray H. Wright, an attorney specializing in professional liability and construction law and former trustee of the VFA.

Celebrating the achievements of Virginians in architecture, Braymer looked back on the history of the Foundation and forward to 2005 and the Center's public opening. "We can now say that the vision for architecture shared by its

founders from the Virginia Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1954 will have been realized in a significant way by the Foundation during this golden anniversary year."

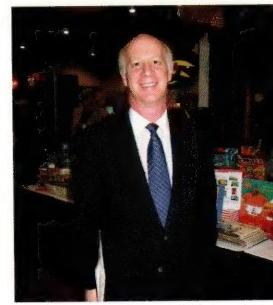


VSAIA President Bill Evans congratulates David Stemann, Jane Jacobs, and Carlton Abbott on the firm's Award for Preservation.

## Architecture Exchange East Launched to Rave Reviews

The Virginia Society AIA celebrated the success of Architecture Exchange East, the conference formerly known as Building Virginia, which took place November 10-12. Renamed to reflect the growth of its scope and attendance over the past sixteen years, the conference focused on increasing regional and global influences, while also providing educational seminars that impact daily practice. "Architecture Exchange East will be the educational and professional forum for our region's building and design world," said Society President William Evans, AIA.

Hundreds of attendees were drawn to the keynote address by architecture critic Paul Goldberger. Known for his "Sky Line" column in *The New Yorker*, Goldberger also spent 25 years with *The New York Times* as architecture critic, cultural news editor, and chief cultural correspondent. Winner of the 1984 Pulitzer Prize for journalism, he has become an internationally recognized expert in architecture, design, and urbanism. Goldberger, a widely influential gadfly of design, addressed the challenges of creating museum spaces in urban environments. Having just paid a visit to the Branch House, he enthused about the potential for increased public awareness and visibility provided by the development of the Virginia Center for Architecture.



Goldberger signed copies of his new book in the exhibit hall.

## Boynton Receives Noland Medal; Other Top Honors to Casteen and HEWV

That Robert A. Boynton, FAIA, would receive yet another award for his service to the architectural profession – the William C. Noland Medal – was not a surprise to his colleagues. A principal of Boynton Rothschild Rowland Architects, of Richmond, he has focused on the arena of professional accreditation for architects. Boynton spent 10 years on APELSCIDLA, the Virginia design professions' regulatory board, and in 2003 served as president of the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB).

His work includes campaigns for legislative proposals on continuing education for professionals, a professional degree requirement for examination and licensure, and a finite statute of limitations. Working with both the AIA and NCARB, he has championed reciprocity, working to allow professionals a greater ability to practice across the nation and around the world. His efforts to cultivate cooperation between the AIA and NCARB have resulted in many allied efforts on major initiatives.

In addition to the Noland Medal, the highest honor bestowed by the Virginia Society AIA on an architect, Boynton has received the NCARB President's Medal, the President's Medal from the Federacion of Colegios of Architects of the Republic of Mexico, and honorary membership from the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada.

### Architecture Medal for Virginia Service

The Virginia Society AIA also honored University of Virginia President John T. Casteen III with the Architecture Medal for Virginia Service for ensuring the preservation of Jefferson's legacy. At the same time, Casteen has insisted that new projects at U.Va. respect the landscape and the existing campus fabric while reflecting a sense of innovation.

During his 14-year tenure as president, Casteen created the position of Architect for the University, launching a new approach to design oversight, while securing private financial support for both preservation of historic structures and investment in new construction. As a result, \$735 million has been invested in university buildings, which consistently involve Virginia architecture firms and use local companies for construction services. Casteen's sense of responsibility to the university's architectural heritage is balanced by his efforts to meet the growing needs of the student population and reflects his own passion as a three-time graduate of Jefferson's university.

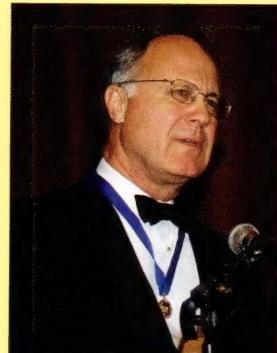
### Fitz-Gibbon Firm Award

The Norfolk-based firm Hanbury Evans Wright Vlattas + Company accepted the T. David Fitz-Gibbon Architecture Firm Award for excelling in campus design, historic preservation, and cultural projects. Created when the practices of founding principals John Paul Hanbury, FAIA, and Michael Evans, AIA, merged in 1985, the firm has since earned 47 design and preservation awards, as well as a nationwide reputation for excellence and attention to detail. Joined by partners Jane C. Wright, AIA, and Nicholas E. Vlattas, AIA, the firm creates learning environments and community spaces, focusing on the responsible use of space.

The firm's service to the profession is marked: following the example of John Paul Hanbury, principal Jane Wright is currently a trustee of the Virginia Foundation for Architecture, while the firm itself has donated design services for the renovation of the Branch House as the Virginia Center for Architecture.



Robert A. Boynton, FAIA



John T. Casteen III



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## Preservation Alliance of Virginia Joins Forces with APVA

Creating a unified message on preservation efforts in Virginia, the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) and the Preservation Alliance of Virginia formally united late in the spring under the umbrella of APVA Preservation Virginia. With this combination, the result of nearly three years of discussions, the APVA will augment its ongoing agenda of preservation through property ownership with the Preservation Alliance's advocacy-based strategy of influencing localities, public officials, and the general public with education initiatives, said Ivor Massey, president of the APVA Preservation Virginia Board of Trustees.

Carter L. Hudgins, former Preservation Alliance board member and vice president of the new organization, believes the Alliance's public policy thrust will be a key element of the new organization's mission. APVA also will continue Alliance programs such as the annual conference, endangered properties list, and legislative awareness day, said Elizabeth Kostelnik, executive director of the new entity.

APVA brings much to the table, with more than 115 years of hands-on stewardship of historic properties and collections. One goal of the combined organization is to develop partnerships and create a statewide network to bring together APVA branch members, professionals, volunteers, developers, state officials, and others involved in preservation issues. As a result of the combination, five former members of the Alliance's governing board were elected to the APVA Preservation Virginia Board of Trustees in September, and Alliance memberships have been transferred to APVA's roster, expanding the organization's membership base in northern and western Virginia.

### Setting the Record Straight

In last issue's story about expansion plans for the VCU campus, proper credit was not given to Smith + McClane Architects, of Richmond, who developed architectural guidelines for the Monroe Park Campus addition. "The thrust of what we recommended was that they maintain a cohesive architectural style over the five or 10 or 20 years that it takes to build this," says principal Patrick McClane, AIA, whose firm continues as a design consultant on the university's business and engineering buildings.

# VFA Notes

## Giving Back to the Practice and Future of Architecture through the Annual Fund

By Stephen A. Coor

Dear Friends,

As a member of the Virginia Foundation for Architecture's Board of Trustees, it has been a pleasure to watch the vision – the dream – of the Virginia Center for Architecture become reality. The Center, located in Richmond's historic Branch House, raises architecture in the Commonwealth to new heights. In April 2005, the Center will open its doors as the Southeast's only architecture museum.

Helping guide the future of architecture in the state of Virginia has enriched my life both professionally and personally, and I am proud that my support for the Foundation includes financial backing for the Foundation's good work. Being realistic about the fact that my business and my future depend on the success of architecture in the Commonwealth, I invest yearly in the Foundation's Annual Fund. The Annual Fund creates programs that cultivate architectural awareness; promotes exhibition programs; and supports publications such as the award-winning *Inform* magazine. All of the good work supported by Annual Fund dollars impacts my business, and it only makes sense that

I should want to give my financial support to the Foundation.

I would like to reach out to architects, engineers, contractors, and folks like myself who work in the building industry across the state, and ask that you please consider an investment in the Virginia Foundation for Architecture's Annual Fund – the financial heart of the Foundation's day-to-day operation. Please join me in filling out the information on the enclosed envelope and returning it with your tax-deductible pledge or payment. To all of you who have supported the Foundation in the past, I send my heartfelt thanks.



Stephen A. Coor

*Stephen A. Coor is Director of Marketing and Architectural Liaison at Allied Concrete Products in Richmond and Chesapeake.*

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# Quantico Making Plans to Purge Prefabricated Post-War Houses

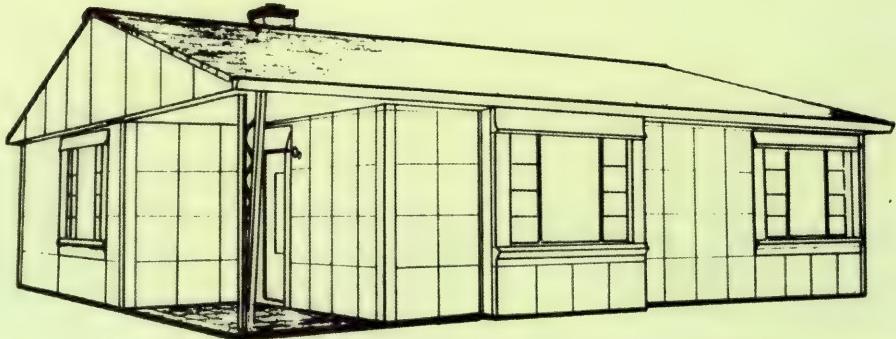
By Marc Wagner

**S**ixty all-steel, ceramic-coated houses tucked away in the Marine Corps Base at Quantico await renewed life – or demolition. These are Lustron houses, which grew out of the post-World War II steel surplus, the spirit of Machine Age innovation, and the growing housing needs of veterans in the mid-20th century.

While perhaps 1,800 Lustron houses survive nationwide, Quantico has the largest collection. Despite the fact that they have easily withstood the test of time, the 1,000-square-foot Lustrons do not meet the United States Marine Corps' current quality of life standards. Fortunately, the Marine Corps recognizes the historic value of these prefabricated houses, which are part of a state and national designated historic district. So, rather than demolish them as a first option, the Marines are refining a marketing plan to make the houses available for public purchase, says Quantico spokesperson Sally Meckle.

Prefabricated houses like the Lustrons had their beginnings in early 20th-century kits that were sold by Sears Roebuck and Aladdin and in designs such as the Armco-Ferro Enamel House and Stran-Streel House exhibited at the Chicago Century of Progress Exposition in 1933. The Lustron Corporation was founded later by Carl Gunnard Strandlund, general manager of the Chicago Vitreous Enamel Products Company, which manufactured the enameled steel panels used on Standard Oil gas stations and White Castle restaurants in the '30s and '40s. After the war, Strandlund took sketches for a metal house to Washington, D.C., hoping for government backing. With encouragement, he hired architect Morris H. Beckman, an MIT graduate and former chief draftsman for Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, to transform the sketches into a detailed design.

Lustron produced the Quantico houses in an auto production line process inside a former Curtiss-Wright airplane plant. The 12-ton houses were delivered on specially designed trailers. Slabs were poured in preparation for the houses and assembly of the 3,000 parts took a



Perspective of a Model 02 from the Lustron house erection manual.

crew about 350 hours. The all-steel enamel-coated panels came in eight pastel colors, such as pink, surf blue, and dove gray.

The simple rectilinear house featured a low-pitched gable roof with an exaggerated Spanish tile pattern. It included unusual interior features such as a round furnace; ceiling-mounted radiant heat panels; a dishwasher that doubled as a clothes washer with the change of a drum; built-in cabinets and dressers; magnets for hanging pictures on the metal panel walls; and different enamel colors in six primary rooms.

Stylistically, Lustrons differed little from other small houses that proliferated after the war. All models, with two-bedroom and three-bedroom layouts where available, came with a recessed corner entrance porch stylized by a V-shaped corner support containing an ornamental, curved metal strip. Large picture windows dominated the front elevation, and the window in the living room was articulated as a slightly projecting bay. The most common model, and the one found at Quantico, is the Westchester Deluxe -Model 02, a two-bedroom house measuring 31 by 35 feet.

Strandlund struggled to keep the Lustron Corporation afloat, although consumer interest was strong. The first house was built in 1946, but despite substantial funding from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, Lustron production lasted only three years. The business closed in the shadow of scandal and government investigations of mismanagement. The company had planned to produce 150 to 180 houses a day, but averaged only 25. In the end, about 2,500 Lustrons were built, a tiny fraction of the houses produced during the post-war construction boom.

Lustrons appear singly or in small numbers in residential neighborhoods,

with one exception: the collection at Quantico. Laid out on curvilinear streets with cul-de-sacs, the houses still serve as enlisted and officers' quarters. Lustrons have inspired some people with their revolutionary innovation, but also have drawn criticism. One official at Quantico remarked that Lustron life is "like living in a filing cabinet."

The houses are attractive to lovers of retro American culture, those striving for an allergy-free environment, and those with a passion for progressive American architectural history. Despite claims that it is difficult to design additions for Lustrons – piercing the heavy steel admittedly poses



Quantico's Lustron Houses feature unique square panels on the exterior walls.

a challenge – many still function as comfortable homes, some with modest additions. The most commonly appreciated characteristics are the tough materials and exterior finish; most Lustron owners have not painted their houses in more than 50 years. Without question, the Lustron houses are built like tanks.

Marc Wagner is an architectural historian at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in Richmond.



## WebWatch by Rebecca E. Ivey

### Design ≠ Art: Functional Objects from Donald Judd to Rachel Whiteread

<http://ndm.si.edu>

This online exhibition from the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum, which coincides with the physical exhibition on view through February 27, addresses an ongoing dialogue in the world of design. Are art and design wholly separate disciplines? Or are they the same? By displaying the functional objects designed by 20-century artists such as Donald Judd, the museum lets objects speak for themselves, while supplying enough information about their creators to stimulate a discussion about the big question: What is art?

Judd provides the strictest interpretation, arguing that art cannot be transposed into an object with an explicit use: "A work of art exists as itself; a chair exists as a chair itself." Contrast this with Scott Burton's view that the two are one and the same, except that, as an artist, his work can diverge from practicality in a way that a craftsman's chair cannot. Richard Tuttle supplies a middle ground, avoiding definitions of "fine art" and "design."

The artists/designers featured contribute views that meander along this spectrum, from Isamu Noguchi's interest in abstraction to Tom Sachs's irreverent "anti-furniture," which is intentionally difficult to use. The objects shown destabilize the duality between art and functional design, at the same time exploring concerns such as class, symbolism, and mass-production.

The Cooper Hewitt website provides gorgeous images alongside illuminating text, delivering a peek at the exhibit. However, a titillating aspect of the physical exhibit is the creation of rooms within which the objects "converse," allowing visitors to come to their own conclusions about how perspectives clash or converge. Unfortunately, the images on the site do not interact — they are simply sexy stock photography of the objects on display.

Nonetheless, the curators have done their job. The text gives a good overview of the various components of the debate, helping the viewer see that it is not the answer that matters, but how the debate opens up the world of design. Grade: A



Friedrich Petzel Gallery

Untitled (floor lamps), 2003, by Jorge Pardo



Carole Félix

Robert Wilson's Parzival: a Chair with a Shadow, 1987

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*In a new house high along the banks of the Occoquan River, architect Robert M. Gurney capitalizes on open vistas of the water, while fostering a sense of solitude in the woods.*

# Site Specific

By Vernon Mays

**B**enjamin Schutz recalls the time when he was perfectly happy with suburban life. Day in, day out, he lived in a cookie-cutter house without giving it a second thought. But after the kids had gone off to college, Schutz and his wife, Joanne Lindenberger, dragged out a box of pictures they had been clipping from magazines and began talking seriously about building a house fashioned just for them. "I don't even think I knew an architect," says the gregarious Schutz, an attorney and crime novelist. "Then suddenly I got big-time into it. I told Joanne, 'Are you sure you want to do this? Because if you get me caring about my environment, you might create a monster.'"

Schutz knew himself well enough to understand that, once he stuck a toe in the water, he'd soon be fully immersed. And it happened just that way. He and Lindenberger worked up a list of Virginia architects and called them in for interviews. First they chose their architect, then they went looking for property.

"They wanted to do a Modern house, but they said they didn't have any land yet. So I thought, oh, this could take 15 years to get completed," recalls Robert M. Gurney, FAIA, the architect whom they selected to design the house. But Gurney says that once he got to know Schutz, he realized something was going to happen – and happen quite fast.



**The broad façade of the house blocks views of the river, saving the main event for those who come inside.**

Photos: Hoachlander/Davis Photography (left); Paul Warchol (right)



**The screened porch, with walls wrapped in mahogany, directs views into the woods (above).**

Within days of hiring Gurney, Schutz called him on the phone and said, "I've got five pieces of property to look at. Do you have some time this weekend?" The search shifted into high gear. The Prince William County site they ultimately selected was not the first one they saw, but it turned out to be the best. The trees were so dense that views of the river were not even visible from the road nearby. "You didn't have any idea that the river was down here," Gurney says, while giving a tour. "Then we reached the point where the living room sits today and said, 'Oh, this is the lot.'"

Once Gurney started designing the house, the characteristics of the site began to shape it. From the outset, he wanted it to

have a feeling of solitude in the woods, in spite of the fact that other houses are scattered on lots surrounding the five-acre site. So, although the house is conceived as a composition of separate forms, the parts were twisted and turned slightly to channel desirable views into the house and obscure views that were unwanted.

The elliptical space containing the sitting area, for instance, was rotated so that the fireplace and the window that frames it would capture a perfect view of the woods. Likewise, translucent Kalwall panels are used in the windows on the east side of the house in order to block views of a neighboring residence built a little too close for comfort.



Visitors approaching the 3,400-square-foot house encounter a balanced composition of architectural forms. Anchoring the ends of the house are a rectangular box built of concrete block and a reddish-brown elliptical tube clad in Corten steel. These two elements are wrapped and penetrated by a pair of three-dimensional trapezoids, one covered in corrugated galvalume and the other framed in wood and glass. When these geometries come together, interesting spaces start to emerge.

Lindenberger and Schutz had approached Gurney with a simple list of needs. They wanted an open living/dining/kitchen area, along with a master bedroom, exercise room, guestroom, two offices, and a screened porch. "They wanted the kitchen open to the living space, but at the same time we were trying to define elements with different heights," says Gurney. "So in the living space, for example, a curved bulkhead in the ceiling outlines the ellipse while it also defines a seating group."

To take advantage of the river views, Gurney flip-flopped the conventional stacking of functions by placing the living spaces on the upper floor and the offices, exercise room, and guest room downstairs. That single move placed the living spaces higher above the water to get more dramatic views, while also freeing Gurney to do more interesting things with the ceiling heights on the upper floor.

The drama of the river views is revealed only after following a controlled path through the house, however. Visitors park in a gravel courtyard and approach from a direction that keeps the river out of sight. The entrance at the lower level leads into a long hall, or gallery, with frosted glass doors into the offices that allow light to penetrate while blocking views outside. The gallery wall, made of galvanized aluminum panels spaced apart on maple battens, pinches the space at one end and splayes on the other toward a sunny stairwell. "This space is really about



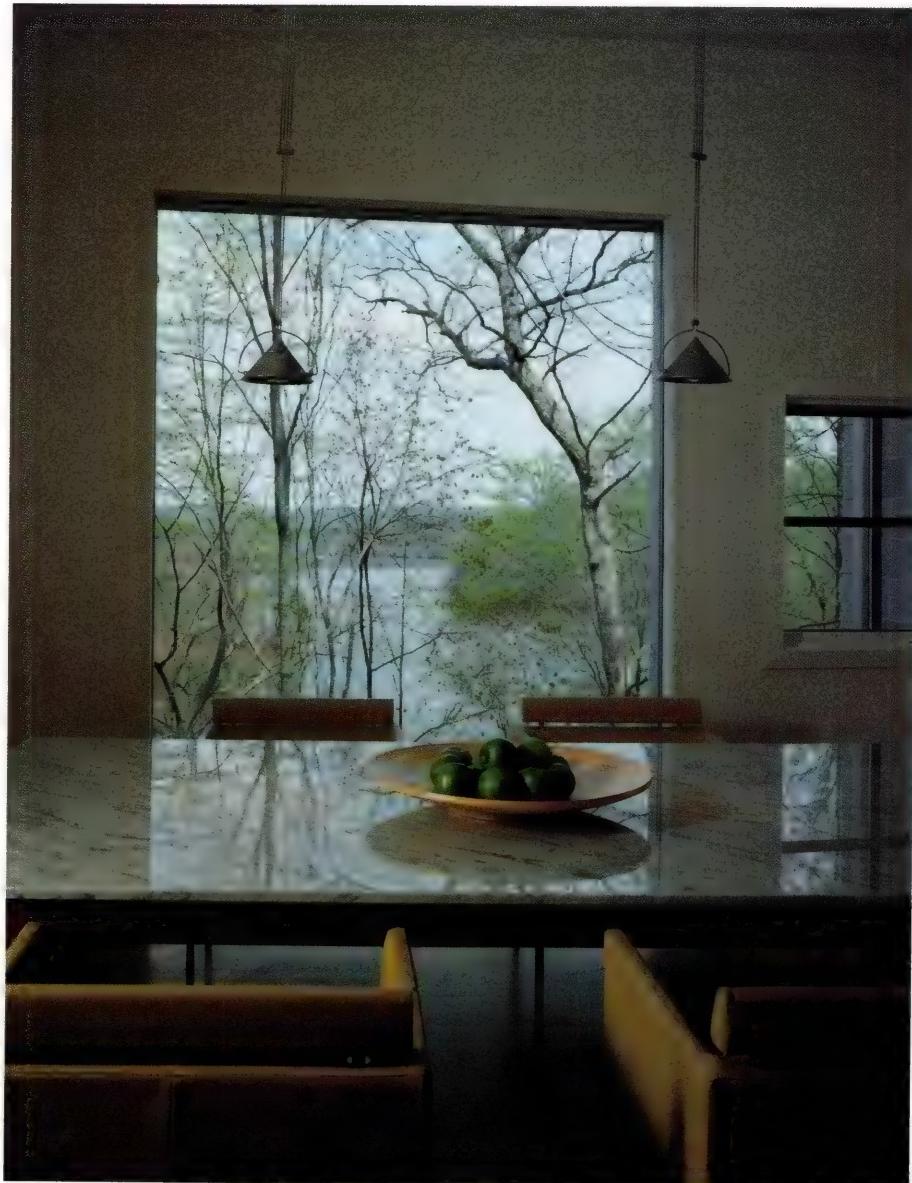
Paul Warchol

**The roof incorporates an oculus that fills the sitting area with light from overhead (photo, above and section, right).**

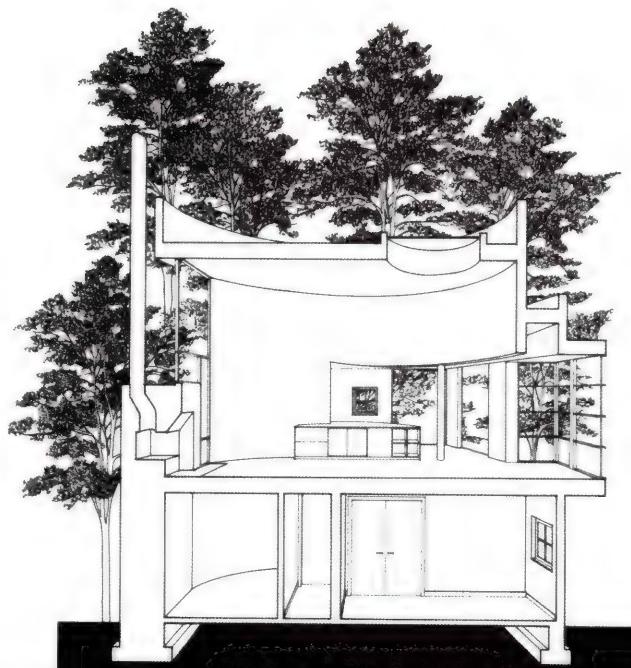
material," Gurney points out. "The whole idea is that you are drawn upward toward the skylight – that's the source of light."

From there, stairs turn around a wall and climb to a second-floor landing. Immediately ahead is a corridor that spans across the front of the house like a bridge. "Ben and Joanne showed me some ideas that they liked involving bridges and spaces," Gurney says. "There's nothing supporting this on the outside, so you feel like you climb the stair and cross the bridge to the living space."

There, the orchestrated walk crescendos as the views of the river become visible through large expanses of glass. Throughout



15





The dramatic end view of the house reveals the rich combination of forms and materials.

the house in places where axial views slice through it, Gurney followed a discipline of placing fixed glass at the end of the axis. "That is the order of this house," he says. "Your eye doesn't stop at the edge of the wall. It keeps going into the woods and down toward the river."

The second-floor master suite also gathers in river views to the north, but Gurney placed the screened porch on the south side of the house for quite a different reason. His idea for the porch was to make a space that offered a different perspective of the site – a place that is more about being in the woods and less about being on the water. This porch is very much a finished room of its own, with richly-colored mahogany planks on the walls, two Kalwall panels enclosing one side, and a gabled roof overhead. Views through screened openings are limited to the woods and nearby ravine.

In the end, by paying close attention to surroundings, Gurney made a believer out of Benjamin Schutz, who asked for a simple set of rooms and was amazed by the richly articulated solution handed to him. "The most magical moment was when Bob first unveiled the model and I thought: that's not a box. Oh, my God. How did you do that?" Schutz recalls. "Then he walked us through where all the rooms were located. They were all there. And they were all in the right places. I thought: It's so cool."

#### **Project:** Occoquan River House, Woodbridge

**Architect:** Robert M. Gurney, FAIA, Architect, Alexandria (Robert M. Gurney, FAIA, Hito Martinez, project designers)

**Consultants:** Advance Engineers (structural); Therese Baron Gurney (interiors)

**General Contractor:** Chandler Construction Co.

**Owners:** Joanne Lindenberger and Benjamin Schutz

#### **RESOURCES**

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Other Vendors: **LIGHTING:** Artemide, Stonco, Lightolier;

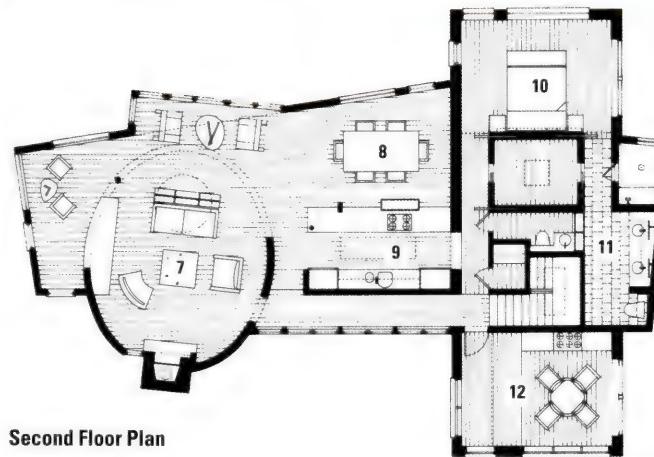
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**FIREPLACE:** Heatilator; **HARDWARE:** FSB; **SKYLIGHTS:** Birdview; **PLUMBING FIXTURES/FITTINGS:** Kohler, Franke, Vola, Hansgrohe, Grohe; **APPLIANCES:** Subzero, Miele, Thermador

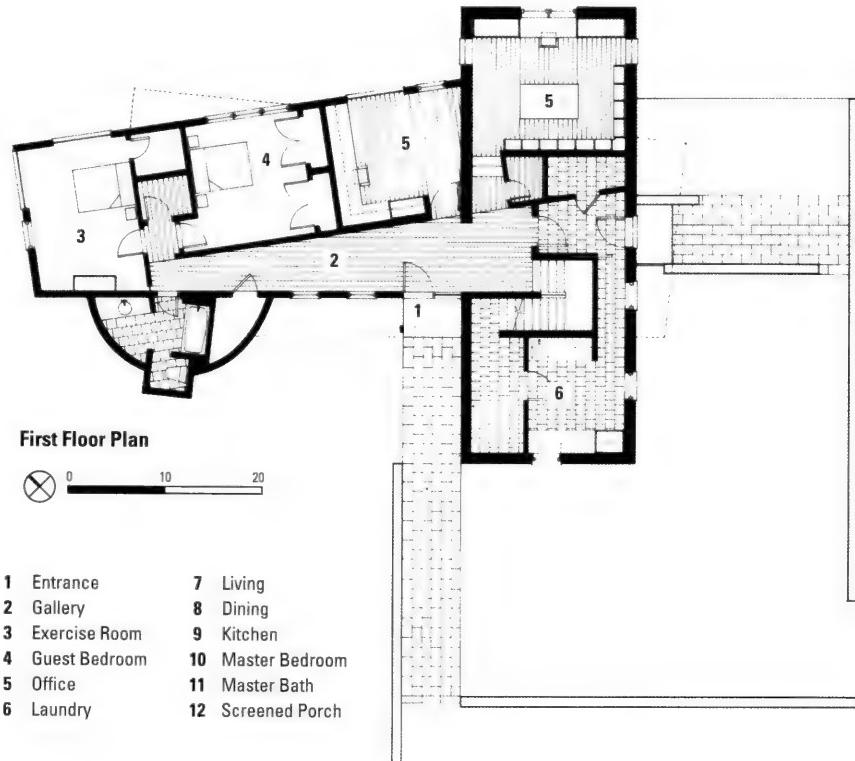
Paul Warchol



View from dining area shows openness to the kitchen, at left, and sitting area beyond.



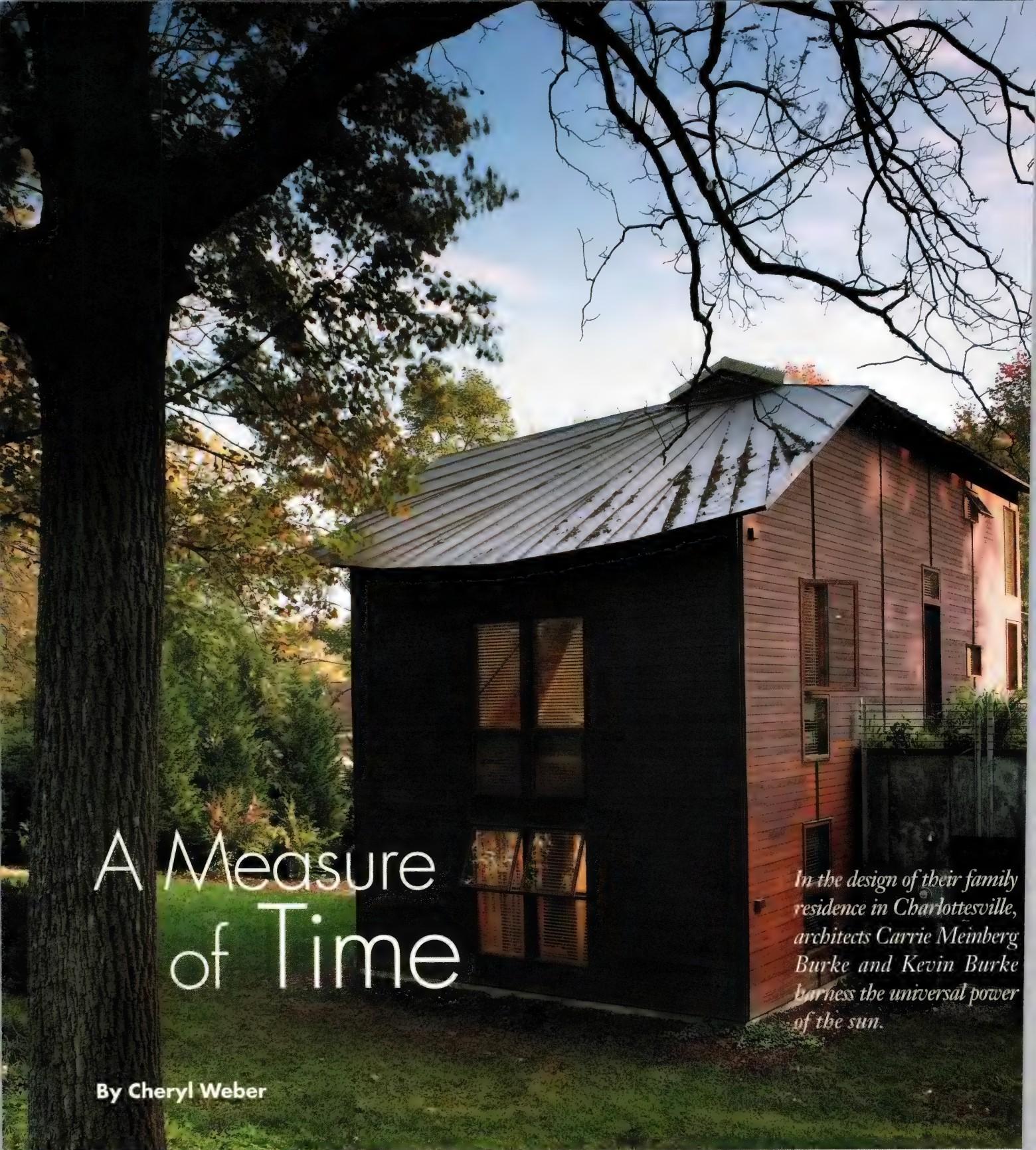
Second Floor Plan



First Floor Plan



- |   |               |    |                |
|---|---------------|----|----------------|
| 1 | Entrance      | 7  | Living         |
| 2 | Gallery       | 8  | Dining         |
| 3 | Exercise Room | 9  | Kitchen        |
| 4 | Guest Bedroom | 10 | Master Bedroom |
| 5 | Office        | 11 | Master Bath    |
| 6 | Laundry       | 12 | Screened Porch |



# A Measure of Time

By Cheryl Weber

**I**magine what you'd come up with if you let seasonal sunlight define the form of a house. It's an idea that had intrigued Carrie Meinberg Burke, AIA, since completing her graduate thesis at Yale, where she made a model that mapped light through a museum. So when it came time to design a house for her family of three, she began to explore the possibilities in greater depth. She and her husband, Kevin Burke, AIA, co-designed a precise, rectangular house whose spatial complexity comes from its align-

ment with the sun's angles. The Charlottesville dwelling is distinctly modern, but it shares some of the vocabulary of older houses nearby. With its old-penny patina, the new copper-clad house stands in the back of its deep lot like a sundial, giving time and sunlight power over the place.

The Burkes dubbed their creation the Timepiece House because on many levels, it acts as a clock and calendar. The house is oriented true solar north/south, so that the sun pierces the center-

*In the design of their family residence in Charlottesville, architects Carrie Meinberg Burke and Kevin Burke harness the universal power of the sun.*



line every day at solar noon. An oculus on the roof shapes those rays into a beam that tracks through the space, skimming the angles of stair walls and the north roof. Cross-hairs inscribed on the walls and floor mark the daylight hours and record the seasonal shifts from solstice to equinox and back.

The question Carrie Burke wanted answered: "Does living in a laboratory that observes natural cycles give us a deeper understanding of cycles beyond human circumstances?" Solar time is slightly different than clock time, she points out. The two are perfectly in sync only twice a year; the rest of the time they're a few minutes off. "It offers a constant reminder that the cycles of nature are more fluid than what we live by."

The device is intriguing, but getting it to dovetail spatially with the design program took two years of painstaking trial and error. The house had to be compact, both for budgetary reasons and because the site required a small footprint. The property itself – a garden clearing that for years had belonged to the Duke House, a large Victorian next door – demanded creative reconfiguring to make it affordable. The Burkes brokered a deal with the Victorian's owner, Marla Ziegler, who had feared that someone would build a large house on the lot. Ziegler, an attorney and historian, agreed



The house is tucked neatly into the rear of a city lot at the end of a quiet lane (above). Visitors enter by climbing gravel steps (detail below left) to the main entrance on the second floor (below).



Photos: Prakash Patel

Roof angles were carefully calibrated to direct the rays of the sun (above).



to purchase a 200-foot-deep street-front section of the parcel, where she hopes to plant a Victorian garden. The Burkes bought the back portion of the property and a right-of-way leading to it.

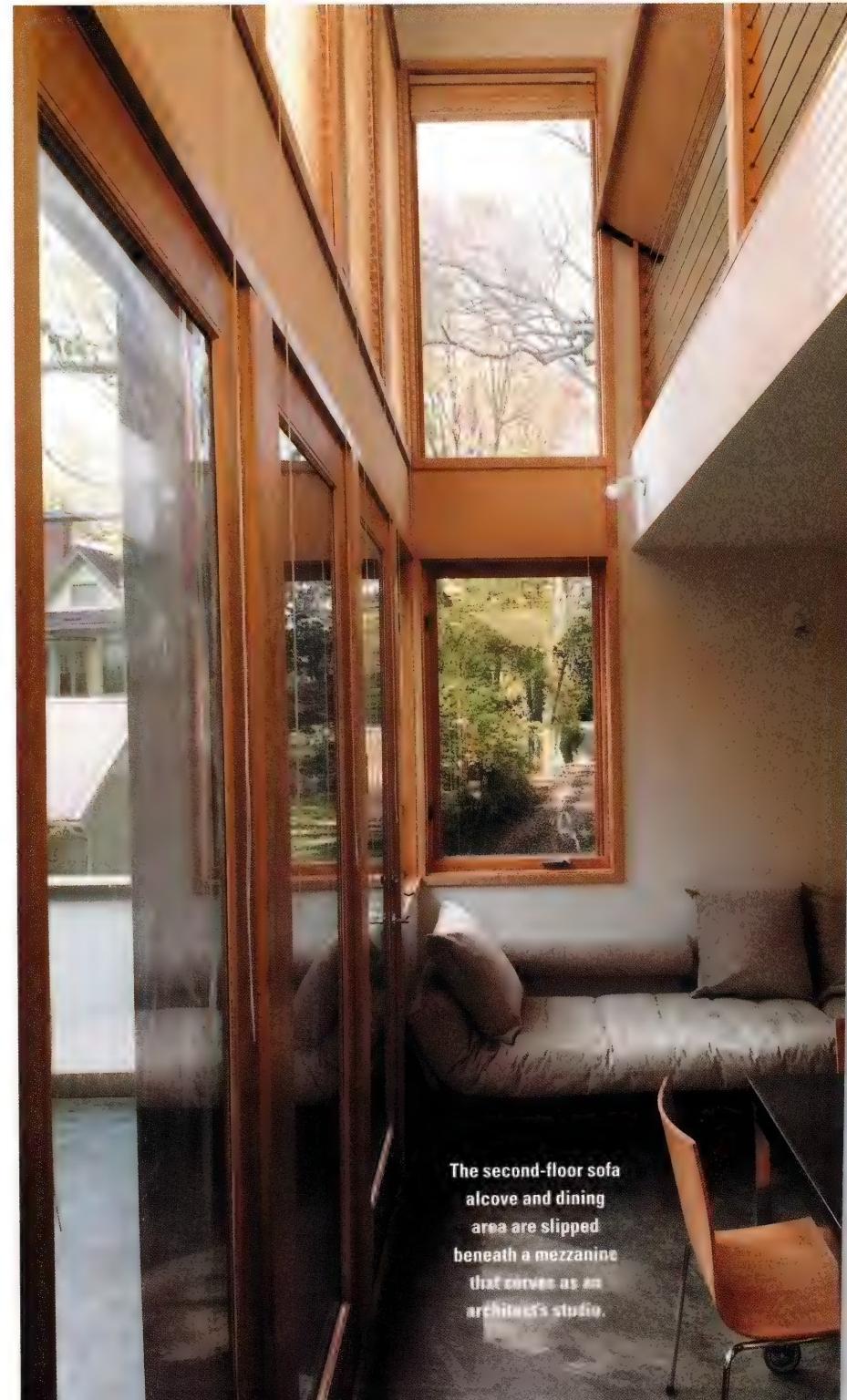
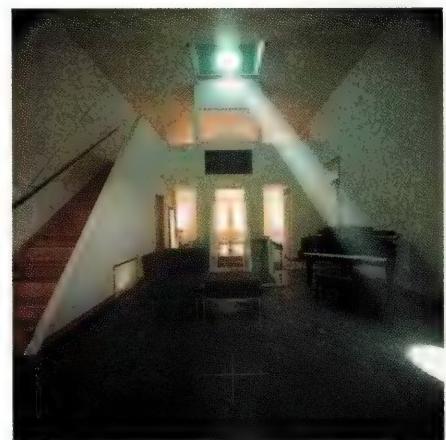
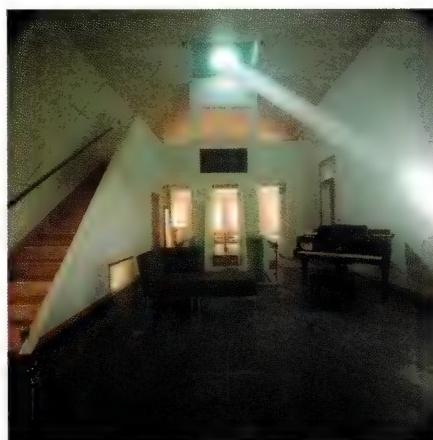
Their house sits 230 feet from the sidewalk and is accessed by a gravel driveway that hugs the property line. The legal documents also gave Zeigler the right to approve the house's design. "Kevin and I talked about how we felt about this kind of oversight," Carrie says. "We wouldn't have wanted to build something she didn't approve of anyway. She understood that we'd be approaching it as a building of our time." Happily, the relationship proved so harmonious that the Burkes occupied Zeigler's third-floor apartment while the project was underway. Carrie took charge of design and general contracting while caring for the couple's daughter Ava, a toddler at the time.

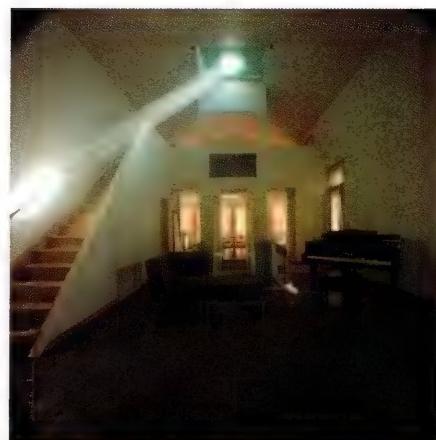
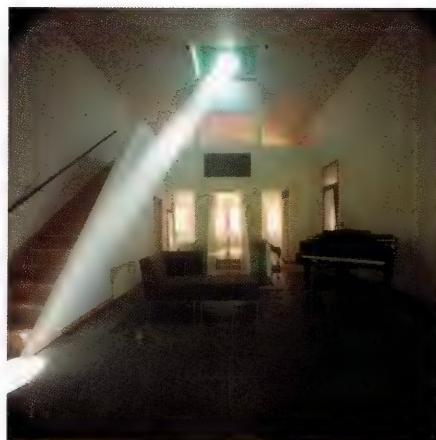
A bedtime story inspired the floor plan. Carrie used to tell Ava about a morning beam of light that woke up the story's main character, appeared in the frying pan, and followed her around during the day. The narrative translated into ground-level bedrooms that face east. Upstairs, a kitchen-cum-conservatory occupies the glassy south façade. In winter, the sun heats up the concrete floor and adjacent outdoor terrace, creating a warm, bright space. The living room, or observatory, lies to the north, where the oculus and sandblasted-glass skylight cast even, diffused light across its angled ceiling. Up another flight of stairs, a sun-bathed mezzanine contains the studio.

The Burkes liked the notion of being disciplined by a rectangular box. Even so, trying to reconcile the plan with the cross-section was like solving a four-dimensional puzzle, fitting functional requirements within the sun's changing angles. Sliding the cross-hairs of the oculus to the north or south also affected the stair location, roof height, and room dimensions. "I realized you don't have to have a lot of volumetric tricks to create a complex experience," Carrie says.

Part of that complexity was achieved by opening up strategic views through the house. From the upstairs studio you can look down through a slot in the stairwell wall to see who's at the side door two levels down. Reveals in the staircase risers also funnel light to the ground floor.

Much of Carrie's time was consumed with calibrating the angles of the radial roof beams that shape the observatory ceiling, so that the winter-solstice sunbeam would skim its surface. She also devel-





A beam of light sweeps slowly across the observatory floor (series, above) during the spring and fall equinoxes. It strikes the centerline of the house at high noon.



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oped a structural diagram showing how the beams fit into a roof truss that holds them away from the oculus, a pivoting point for the sun. Based on her dimensions, Carrie's longtime friend and former boss, architect W. David Winitzky, AIA, generated a full-scale CAD drawing of the truss to within a  $1/32$ -inch tolerance. The steel fabricator used the drawing as a pattern. A crane carefully hoisted it into position, and the beams were fitted into steel brackets precisely angled along the truss.

The copper-covered roof form above the observatory is a reverse turret, playing off the metal-topped turret on Ziegler's

Light pierces all three floors during the summer solstice (above).



Copper cladding on  
the exterior is  
complementary to  
clapboard siding on  
the nearby Victorian.

house next door. Copper siding complements the Victorian's clapboard profile. The architects chose recycled material because it improves with age and requires no maintenance, which frees time for other things. It also lets the 2,000-square-foot house visually recede in the back of the lot, like a carriage house in the yard.

Ecology drove every aspect of the design, from the manipulation of sun and shading to the use of sustainably harvested woods and non-toxic finishes. "We wanted to understand the cycles of nature on that larger scale," Carrie says. She is perhaps most proud of the green roof that doubles as a kitchen garden outside the front door. The elevated entry cleverly covers the mechanical room, and its foot of soil supports seasonal produce such as peppers and Thai basil.

So what's it like to live in a time-piece? Carrie says that being aware of the sun's swift progress was uncomfortable at first, like time was flying. But gradually it became a source of comfort. "It put everything into perspective," she says. "Now my whole relationship to time feels much more relaxed, and my sense of measuring productivity has been put into a larger context. On a day-to-day basis, the three of us are thrilled to be living in the house."

*Cheryl Weber is a freelance writer in Severna Park, Md., and a contributing writer at Residential Architect magazine.*

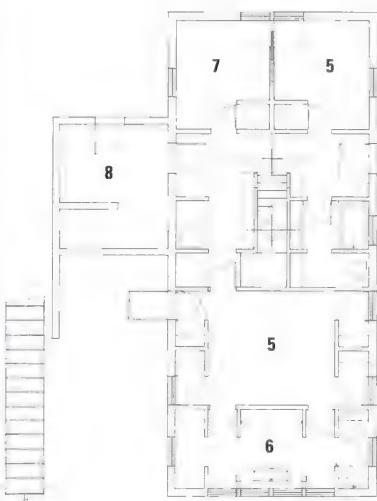
**Generous glass openings on the south façade bring lots of light into spaces such as the master bathroom (right).**



## RESOURCES

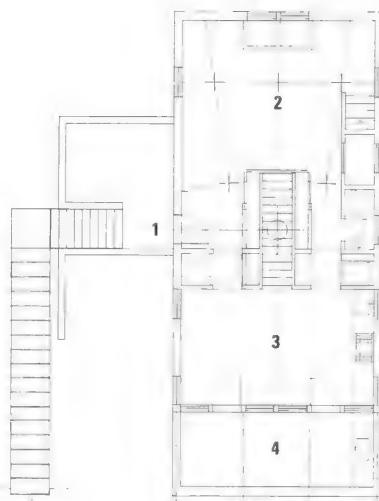
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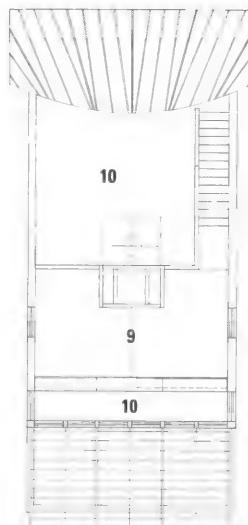


**Ground Level Plan**

- |                  |                      |
|------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Entrance       | 6 Bath/Dressing Room |
| 2 Living/Dining  | 7 Study              |
| 3 Kitchen/Dining | 8 Mechanical Room    |
| 4 Terrace        | 9 Architect's Studio |
| 5 Bedroom        | 10 Open to Below     |



**Main Level Plan**



**Mezzanine Level Plan**

# Busting Out



*The assets of a mediocre tract house are reconsidered when Winchester architects Elizabeth Reader and Charles Swartz transform it into a delightful, spacious home for their family.*

**F**rom the day they signed the mortgage papers to buy it, Elizabeth Reader, AIA, and Charles Swartz, AIA, knew they were destined to reinvent the bland house plopped high on a hill overlooking the town of Winchester. "It was a perfectly fine house," says Swartz. "It had 8-foot ceilings and, from a functional standpoint, everything worked. We just detested it."

Their loathing was not unfounded. Originally built in 1968, the house was oddly proportioned with a flattened gable roof and a boxy, conventional floor plan. On front and back, the second floor extended awkwardly two feet beyond the first-floor load-bearing

walls. Small windows prevented occupants from enjoying views of the Blue Ridge Mountains that the hilltop afforded. And, in some rooms, the generous 8-foot ceilings were interrupted by bulkheads, lowering the overhead clearance to 6-foot-8.

The architects, both of whom are principals of Reader & Swartz Architects in Winchester, resolved to take the less-than-stellar building and create an open, light-filled loft space that would take full advantage of the views. "It was like turning it into a beach house," says Swartz. In redesigning the residence, they reversed the living and sleeping levels, which moved the bedrooms downstairs in the existing eight-foot-high spaces and put the



A side view illustrates how the architects preserved the "ghost" of the old house in the gable end, with translucent glass panels filling the gap between old and new (above).



The front façade boasts large windows and a broad canopy (right). A similar view shows the house prior to renovation (below right).

Photos: Hochlander/Davis Photography

**Reader and Swartz raised the roof and added more sleeping and living space on the back (above).**

living/dining/cooking spaces upstairs to get the benefit of the highest ceilings and best views.

After living there four years without making any changes, they commenced the work. Most of the house was gutted, except for the interior stairs. However, the design approach was not to completely obliterate the ghost of the old house, but rather to use its skeleton as an element of the transformation. "We didn't want to level the house," says Swartz. "We wanted to embrace its mediocrity."

On the exterior, the outline of the old 4-over-12 roof pitch is expressed in the new glazing on the gable ends. Inside, the exist-



Reader & Swartz



Partition walls were eliminated from the second floor, which is transformed into a spacious loft.

ing two-by-four stud walls on the ends of the house were stripped bare. Now they create a structure to support new shelves, which are accessed on one side of the loft by an alternating-tread staircase. On the other side, a rolling ladder salvaged from an outdated telephone building provides a means of reaching the highest shelves, which house a variety of books, photographs, art, and everyday objects in an ordered composition.

Additional space was gained on the back of the house with a three-story wood-and-glass addition framed in steel. On the first floor, it contains a new master bedroom and bath. The second floor contains a glass-enclosed living room that feels so open it is like having a year-round back porch. The addition's inverted shed roof opens wide to the sky, expanding the eastward vistas and virtually erasing any memory of the old house.

"The difference is so amazing," Swartz says. "It's strange to live in the same place, but in a different house. I used to always want to get outside or go hiking, but now I enjoy staying in the house. The light is so great in there."

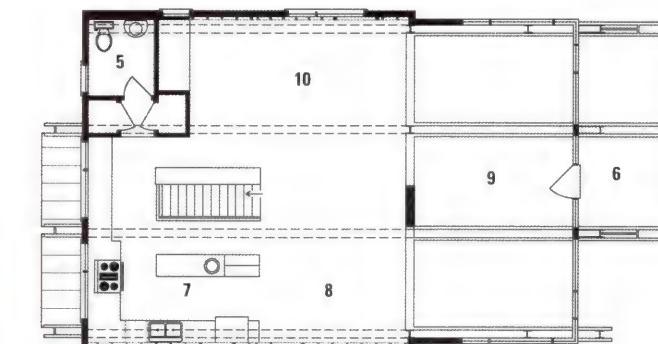
*—Vernon Mays*



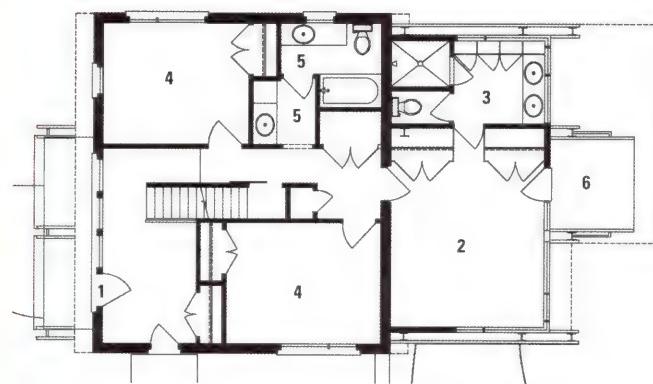
The addition contains a new, light-filled living space on the upper floor (above).



The alternating-tread stair along one of the outside walls also creates shelf space to display everyday items.



Second Floor Plan



First Floor Plan



- |   |                |    |             |
|---|----------------|----|-------------|
| 1 | Entrance       | 6  | Balcony     |
| 2 | Master Bedroom | 7  | Kitchen     |
| 3 | Master Bath    | 8  | Dining Area |
| 4 | Bedroom        | 9  | Living Area |
| 5 | Bath           | 10 | Library     |

# A Stage for Living



*Meditch Murphey Architects' laid-back approach to design results in a subtly detailed guest house that takes a back seat to the panoramic views of the rural New York landscape.*

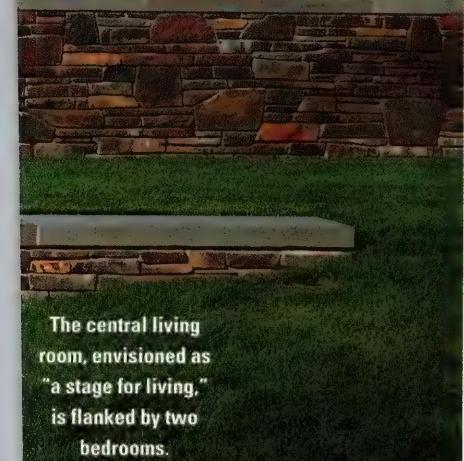
**W**hen John Murphey, AIA, begins talking about the Millbrook guest house he designed in Dutchess County, New York, he waxes philosophical about designing to capture the beauty of the site. "It's like going on a picnic," he says. "You pick a spot with a nice view, maybe under a tree, and lay out your blanket. Then, you're done with the architecture. You get on with having a picnic, which is the real business at hand." To an observer of the guest house and the landscape it inhabits, Murphey's comments become clear. He wanted to build in a way that makes the building disappear and the site emerge as all-important.

The guest house is located atop a hill in a valley surrounded by the Taconic ridges of New York state. The clients commissioned the two-bedroom, two-bath guesthouse from Murphey, who served as project architect for the main house, built in 1989, when he worked for Washington, D.C., architect Hugh Newell Jacobsen.

The original house was built as a series of Modernist pavilions, which was intentionally left open-ended in order to allow for expansion and extension into the landscape. "It's a Modernist abstraction of older farm buildings, an idea that we continued and modified with the guest house," says Murphey, a principal of Meditch Murphey Architects in Chevy Chase, Maryland.

Murphey began by studying whether the guest house would be better off connected to the main house or separated from it. The site offered a natural place set apart from the existing residence, while also suggesting a design scheme. Murphey conceived of the arrangement much like the evolution of a farmstead, with additions that convey a connection with existing buildings while establishing their own uniqueness.

In combination, the site plan and entry into the guest house allow for a gradual revelation of the site's wonders. Visitors approach from the west, shielded from a full view of the building



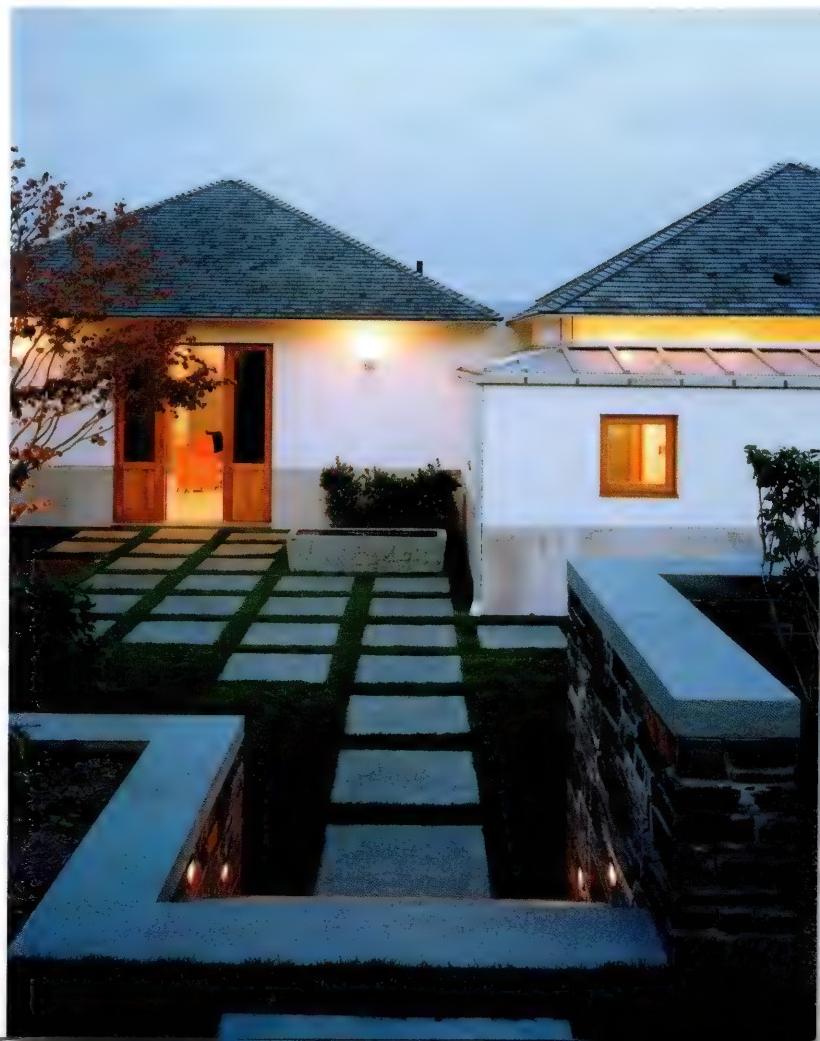
The central living room, envisioned as "a stage for living," is flanked by two bedrooms.

Photos: Maxwell MacKenzie



Grass steps cascade downhill on the east side to expose sweeping views of the Taconic ridges (above). A grass parterre on the west side creates a sheltered courtyard (below).

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or the valley beyond. After descending through a heavily landscaped garden, they encounter a hidden embankment with a manicured grass court sheltered by the guest house's three pavilions. At the entrance, a small sheltered seating area offers respite. "You don't arrive on axis with the door," says Murphrey. "You ricochet off the carved stone water basin, and walk around and into the entrance."

All this – and the spectacular view has yet to be revealed. Only after walking through a series of small interior spaces does one enter the living room, which is bounded on the east by a vast expanse of glass affording a sweeping view of the countryside. To mimic the experience of being out in the landscape, Murphrey thrust the central pavilion outward, creating a panoramic theater. During construction he realized that the living room, in addition to being a platform for viewing the landscape, also looked and acted like a stage. He developed the idea, turning the living area into a proscenium – a stage for living.



**Simple detailing and expanses of glass put the view, not the architecture, on display.**

Playing with the concept of human activity as the main event, Murphey strived to place the architecture in the back seat. Using minimalist detailing both inside and outside, and making use of vernacular materials such as stucco, stone, metal, and cedar, Murphey created a serene slate that can – and, against the dramatic landscape, does – fade into the background.

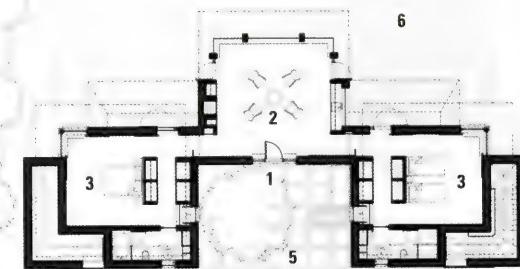
Murphey mentions that while working on the project he read Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, comparing Hemingway's writing to a grid to which readers apply their own textures, colors, and interpretations. He suggests that the guest house has a little bit of that same malleable nature: "It invites interpretation."

—Rebecca E. Ivey



Photos: Maxwell MacKenzie

The guest house's interior finishes and details are restrained and graceful.



Floor Plan



- |                          |                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Entrance               | 5 Courtyard         |
| 2 Living Room/Proscenium | 6 Bluestone Terrace |
| 3 Bedroom                | 7 Grass Parterre    |
| 4 Grass Parterre         |                     |



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The Solaire - New York, NY

Photo Credit: Balmori Associates

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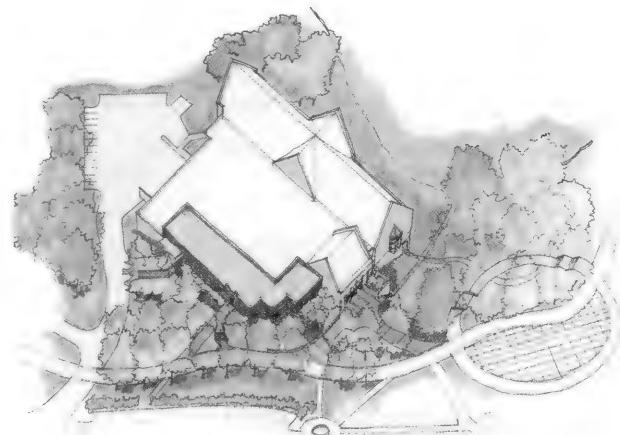
## On the Boards



**Architect:** Baskervill, Richmond

**Project:** The Edgeworth Building

This Richmond building will be renovated by Forest City Commercial Group of Cleveland, Ohio, according to Baskervill's design. The 188,000-s.f. Deco-era facility in Shockoe Bottom offers amenities unique to the area. Tel: 804-343-1010 / [www.baskervill.com](http://www.baskervill.com)

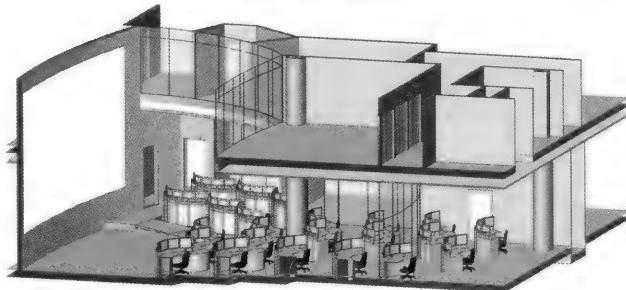
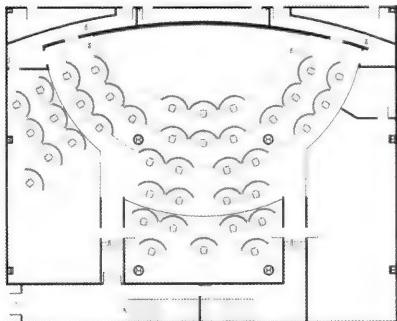


**Architect:** BCWH, Richmond

**Project:** Heilman Dining Center Expansion

With Porter Consulting, BCWH assisted the University of Richmond in a study of the Heilman Dining Center expansion. The project will transform the "servery" into a "marketplace" atmosphere. The addition expands the kitchen and convenience store, and consolidates office space. Tel: 804-788-4774

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**Architect:** DMJM Design, Washington, D.C.

**Project:** Operational Command Center (OCC)

The project relocates the OCC for the Washington Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The 20,000-s.f., two-story center will be built within the existing complex to house operational control and training. The design supports video display walls and custom control stations. Tel: 703-807-2500



**Architect:** Gresham Smith & Partners, Richmond

**Project:** Prince William/Fauquier Oncology Center

A joint venture between Prince William and Fauquier Hospitals, the Oncology Center will provide cancer care through radiation and medical treatments. The 20,000-s.f. facility contains a linear accelerator vault, a CT simulator, and 15 infusion chairs. Tel: 804-788-0710



**Architect:** Hayes, Seay, Mattern and Mattern, Inc. (HSMM),  
Roanoke and Washington, D.C.

**Project:** Dining Hall and Food Court

This renovation turns an existing cafeteria in a large government facility into an inviting, modernized dining venue. The space will seat 400 people and includes a food court, intimate dining areas, and a sports bar setting. Tel: 540-857-3257



**Architect:** Huff Morris Architects, Richmond

**Project:** First Baptist Church

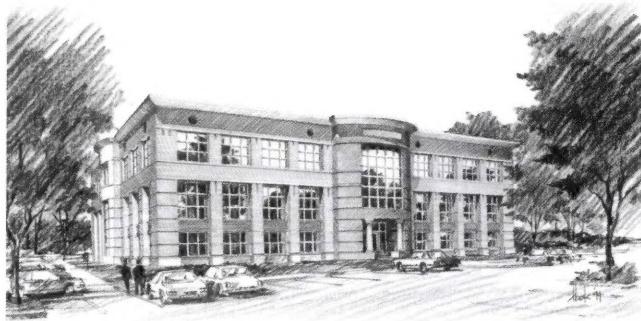
A 44,000-s.f. addition to the First Baptist Church in Newport News will increase the church's space for Christian education and recreation, and will become the Hampton Roads campus of the John Leland Center for theological studies. Tel: 804-343-1505 / [www.huffmorris.com](http://www.huffmorris.com)



**Architect:** Meditch Murphrey Architects, Chevy Chase, Md.

**Project:** Colonial Renovation

Meditch Murphrey Architects is completely renovating this traditional brick center-hall colonial in Bethesda, Maryland. The design includes an extensive landscape plan, as well. Tel: 301-657-9400

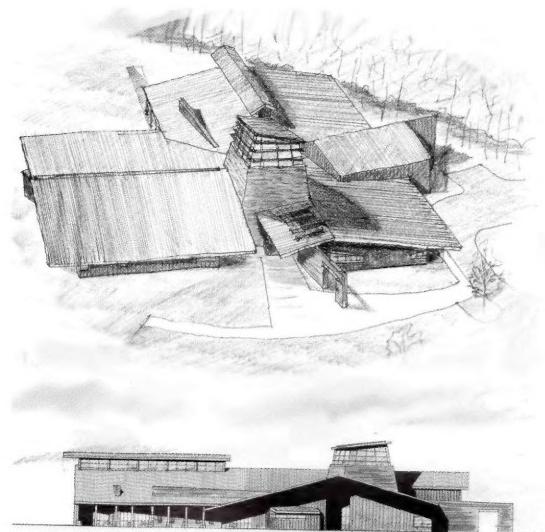


**Architect:** Mitchell/Matthews Architects and Planners, Charlottesville

**Project:** Charlottesville Office Building

A short walk from the University of Virginia, this Class A office building is moving forward after a ten-year pause. The owners asked for a simple, modern, and efficient three-story building with a graceful entry, a curved lobby, and classical proportions reflecting the area's architectural heritage. Tel: 434-979-7550

## On the Boards



**Firm:** Phillips Swager Architects, McLean

**Project:** Thurmont Regional Library

This 25,000-s.f. branch of the Frederick Co. public library system, located in the Catoctin Mountains, in Thurmont, Md., will house over 100,000 volumes. Services include programming, base building, interior design, furniture acquisition, and construction administration. Tel: 703-748-1804 / Contact: linn.l@psa-ae.com.



**Architect:** SFCS, Inc., Roanoke

**Project:** Armed Forces Retirement Home

An extensive renovation/addition for this Gulfport, Miss., community adds 208,450 s.f. of enriched housing apartments. It includes updated assisted living, memory support, and transitional care, a wellness center, and adult day care. Tel: 540-344-6664 / Contact: TLJ@sfcs.com

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**Architect:** Wiley & Wilson, Lynchburg with Smith + McClane, Richmond

**Project:** Richmond County Courthouse

The Richmond County District Courts building will be an 18,000-s.f. two-story facility. Interior functions include the sheriff's office, dispatchers, combined clerk's office, a courtroom, and future expansion capabilities. Tel: 434-947-1901 / [www.wileywilson.com](http://www.wileywilson.com)



**Architect:** Marcellus Wright Cox Architects, Richmond

**Project:** Hampden-Sydney College Library

With full technological capabilities, this 77,000-s.f. library will house 350,000 volumes and seat up to 30 percent of the student population. The design enhances the simple, elegant Federal style of architecture on campus. Tel: 804-780-9067

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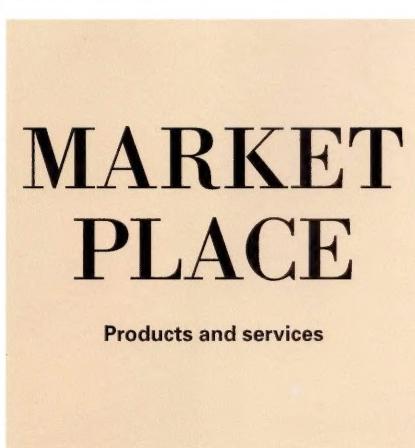
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The thirty-year-old pedestrian tunnel leading beneath Hwy. 1 into Arlington's Crystal City was in dire need of a makeover. Over time it had come to signify the entrance into Crystal City, an urban mixed-use community in close proximity to the Pentagon. But it was showing its age, both through deterioration and its dated design. When developers Charles E. Smith Commercial Realty began looking for a fresh look, Manoj Dalaya, AIA, of McLean-based Kishimoto Gordon Dalaya, was there with a solution.

While Arlington officials remained indifferent, the developer had a vested interest in updating the tunnel's appearance. The company wanted a design that would take up a smaller footprint, resist vandalism, and permit quick cleanup, while conveying a cutting-edge identity for the city. Dalaya began by exploring associations with the word "crystal." After experimenting with ideas from a crystalline sculpture to a shard of glass with a sewn canopy, the architect and developer settled on a tiered design that applied planes of glass to an exposed steel structure. The entry is distinctive enough to serve as a marker for the community, but transparent enough to allow visual connectivity between sides of the street. "We reduced the footprint by 25 percent by getting rid of ramps and putting in a chair lift," says Dalaya.

While custom steel plates would have been the ideal material to create the stepped design, the budget demanded the use of standard I-beams. Dalaya decided to simply cut them into two parts to create a custom frame. Horizontal canopy systems with translucent glass shield the interior and, when lit internally at night, emit a soft glow. "We wanted to celebrate the structure, and try not to enclose things," Dalaya says. "Internally, we wanted to keep all of the materials intact, instead of just ripping things out. We wanted to clean and put a new stain on them to resist vandalism."

The new entry, completed in May, reflects Charles E. Smith's commitment to Crystal City's design quality. And, thanks to Dalaya, Arlington residents are starting to ask when other pedestrian tunnels will get a similar facelift.

*- Rebecca E. Ivey*

## Stepping It Up



Photos: Duane Lempke, Sisson Studios

Citizen committees worked with the architects on the landscaping and canopy design.

The design makes an asset out of standard I-beams, which made the project more affordable.

